depositors. List of the companies who have defaulted in repayment of public deposit during the last two years:

Sl.No.	Name of the Companies
1.	Manipal Finance Corporation Ltd.
2.	Al-Ameen Islamic Financial & Investments Corpn. (India) Ltd.
3.	Capital Chamber Finance Ltd.
4.	Integrated Finance Company Ltd.
5.	Gopal Arya Finance Ltd.
6.	Syal Finlease Ltd.
7.	Ju-Ju Finance Ltd.
8.	Shabnam Leasing & Finance Ltd.
9.	Escorts Finance Ltd.
10.	Standard Saving & Investment Co. Ltd.
11	Vridhishri Finance & Investment India Ltd.

(d) Reserve Bank has been taking action against NBFCs which have not complied with the provisions of RBI Act and the directions thereunder or have shown weaknesses in the financial position. Such action includes prohibiting the companies from carrying on NBFCS activity, acceptance of deposits and alienation of assets. Wherever, the default is persistent in nature, Bank initiates winding up proceedings and also files criminal complaint against the directors of the NBFC.

Increase in prices of gold and silver

1537. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that prices of gold and silver are rising in the country during the last 2-3 years;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this increase; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to bring down the prices of gold and silver?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The average price of gold per 10 gram in India rose from Rs. 5192 in April 2003 to Rs. 6551 in November 2004, but eased lower during the subsequent months to Rs. 6058 in

July 2005. The price thereafter firmed up to reach a high of Rs. 7925 in January 2006. Silver prices were also generally easy during 2003 but gained during 2004. The price was subdued during most of 2005, but showed a firm trend towards the year end, with the price reaching Rs. 12983 per kg in January, 2006. The Movements in prices of gold and silver in India are generally in tandem with similar movements in international markets. The rise in the prices in the recent periods in India largely reflect the rise abroad.

Expansion of banks

1538. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been urged to expand Public Sector Banks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are considering to expand Public Sector Banks; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) To enable the Public Sector Banks (PSBs) to carry out their functions efficiently and without impediment, Government has announced and autonomy package for the public sector banks on 22.02.2005 which, *inter-alia,* allows them to pursue new lines of business as part of overall business strategy and make suitable acquisitions of companies or businesses, close/merge unviable branches, open overseas offices, set up subsidiaries and exit a line of business, subject to statutory requirements, Government policy prescriptions and regulatory guidelines issued by RBI from time to time.

Introduction of Inheritance Tax

1539. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce Inheritance Tax in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Government are aware that the Inheritance Tax is unpopular in the countries wherever it has been imposed?